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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [UP](#)
SUBJECT: NO CONSENSUS YET ON NEW SPEAKER: RADA CLOSES
PLENARY UNTIL NOVEMBER 18

REF: A. KYIV 2242
[1](#)B. KYIV 2025

Classified By: Political Counselor Colin Cleary for reasons 1.4 (b,d).

Summary

[1](#)1. (C) On November 13, a day after the Ukrainian Parliament (Rada) voted to remove Speaker Arseniy Yatsenyuk in a tumultuous session (Ref. A), the Rada was unable to find consensus on a replacement candidate and recessed until November 18. Rada contacts told us that Volodymyr Lytvyn, leader of the Lytvyn Bloc, currently appears to be the favored candidate. The Tymoshenko Bloc (BYuT), which had stood by Yatsenyuk, does not appear shaken by the Speaker's removal. Selection of the new speaker -- be it Lytvyn or someone else -- should offer clues as to the prospect for a new coalition -- or signal a renewed move toward early elections. End Summary.

No New Speaker Yet

[1](#)2. (C) A day after voting to remove Rada Speaker Yatsenyuk, the Rada was unable to find consensus on a replacement candidate and closed its November 13 session early. Deputy Speaker and Regions MP Oleksandr Lavrynovych announced that the next session would be held on Tuesday, November 18, when the chamber would take up the issue of Yatsenyuk's replacement again. Leading candidates for the position include Lavrynovych, OU-PSD MP and Yushchenko ally Ivan Plyush, and Volodymyr Lytvyn, head of the Lytvyn Bloc. Regions MP Yuriy Myroshnychenko told us that factions must agree on a candidate, or none would receive the 226 votes necessary to take over the Speaker's chair, and that the Rada session was closed because "we all have to go negotiate."

Lytvyn, or Not Lytvyn

[1](#)3. (C) OU-PSD MP Oles Doniy, one of 10 OU-PSD MPs to vote for their erstwhile OU-PSD colleague Yatsenyuk's removal, told us that Lytvyn is the most likely candidate for Speaker, and that he had two paths to the position. First, Lytvyn could align with BYuT and a majority of OU-PSD MPs to create a coalition. BYuT has publicly offered Lytvyn the Speaker's post if his Bloc signs on, although Lytvyn has reportedly demanded the Speaker's chair and up to four cabinet ministries for such a grouping. OU-PSD MP Mykola Katerynychuk told us that the insurgent OU-PSD MPs (Ref. B) may try to force the faction to vote on such a coalition this weekend.

[1](#)4. (C) Doniy said that Lytvyn could also align with Regions, the Communist Party and United Center (which represents seven of the 72 MPs in the OU-PSD faction). However, Doniy and other contacts dismissed this potential coalition as unconstitutional and easily challenged in court, because

United Center could not join a coalition without a majority of its OU-PSD faction voting in favor. Without UC's seven MPs, Regions, Lytvyn and the Communists fall four short of the necessary 226 votes to form a coalition. However, OU-PSD MP Kyrylo Kulikov told us that it is not a question of what is legal or constitutional, but "a question of what they will do," adding that changing the Rada rules to allow a card vote to remove Yatsenyuk instead of by ballot was illegal under Rada rules but "they did it anyway."

15. (C) BYuT MP Andriy Shkil told us that if Regions' MP Lavrynovych is elected Speaker, it could signal that Regions and Yushchenko would work together to push through election funding and other election-related legislation, which Shkil intimated would be easier with Lavrynovych in the Speaker's chair.

Few Tears for Yatsenyuk, Few Fears for Tymoshenko

16. (C) Doniy told us that despite Yatsenyuk's September letter of resignation, he had wanted to stay on as Speaker, but was "playing too many games" by balancing his interests between Yushchenko and Tymoshenko. Regions MP Vladimir Makayenko added that Yatsenyuk was "too independent" and no one, including BYuT, is really sorry to see him go. Makayenko had few kind words for the former Speaker, telling us that Yatsenyuk was less interested in the work of Speaker than the "PR that came with the job."

17. (C) BYuT MP Valeriy Pysarenko told us that, in the end, Yatsenyuk's ouster was "nothing big" to BYuT, and that they still maintained "plenty of levers" to use to achieve their political goals. Doniy added that Tymoshenko can "sleep safely" because her position and her government are safe. While no coalition is needed to vote out the Speaker, a coalition is needed to form a new government, and the "anti-government" coalition, including UC, was a non-starter. Regions MP Olena Bondarenko echoed public statements by her party when she told us that Regions "would not touch" Tymoshenko, preferring to let her try to clean up the economic mess "that she created."

What did Yushchenko Know, and When Did He Know It?

18. (U) President Yushchenko announced that Yatsenyuk's removal destabilized the political situation. Regions Head Viktor Yanukovych told the press that Yushchenko called him two times from Warsaw to ask Regions not to vote out Yatsenyuk. Appearing on the popular Shuster Live news program, Ukrainska Pravda journalist Mustafa Nayem said that Yushchenko asked his chief of staff, Viktor Baloha, to instruct his UC MPs not to vote for Yatsenyuk's removal, but was rebuffed by Baloha, who said that Yushchenko would have to call the MPs himself as Baloha did not control them.

19. (C) Many Rada contacts claimed that Yatsenyuk's removal was done with Yushchenko's blessing and that the timing of the ouster, when Yushchenko was in Poland, gave the President plausible deniability. Regions MP Dmytro Tabachnyk told us that "if Baloha still has a job today" it means Yushchenko backed Yatsenyuk's removal. BYuT MP Kostyantyn Bondarev told us that Yushchenko wanted to destabilize the Rada as it is "a government branch that has stood up to him." Kulikov echoed Bondarev, saying Yushchenko aimed to paralyze the Rada, adding that he is so focused on destroying Tymoshenko that he will "destroy the country to do it."

Next Plenary Week

10. (C) The Rada must begin the next plenary week on November 18 with a vote on a new Speaker, many contacts told us, as any legislation passed by the Rada must be signed by the Speaker before going to the President for his signature. Without a Speaker, Kulikov told us, the Rada would cease to

be a functioning branch of government, leaving the President to rule by decree. MPs told us that factions would meet to discuss strategy and negotiations between factions on a way forward would continue through the weekend. Regions MP Makayenko cautioned us that any final agreement was unlikely to be reached before Monday, if then, but that a "war of words" would continue to be fought in the press through the weekend.

Comment

¶11. (C) Yatsenyuk's ouster does not present an obvious path forward, but his replacement could signal which direction the Rada will go. A Lytvyn speakership could mean a serious attempt to create a new coalition. Which coalition, either BYuT/OU-PSD/Lytvyn or a more legally questionable Regions/Lytvyn/Communist/UC, would be revealed by how the votes line up. Another MP in the Speaker's chair, such as Regions MP Lavrynovych, could signal a renewed push for early elections.

TAYLOR